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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 BEIJING 004844

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TAGS: PREL PGOV PARM PHUM PNUC MARR IR IZ SU CH

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S JULY 23 MEETING WITH AFM HE YAFEI:  
TAIWAN, DARFUR, HUMAN RIGHTS, FOOD SAFETY AND MORE

REF: A. BEIJING 4827  
B. BEIJING 4801

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson.  
Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

¶1. (C) The United States must make "firmer and clearer warnings" to Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian not to hold the "dangerous" UN referendum, and giving Chen a visa to transit the United States would counter U.S. statements against the referendum, Assistant Foreign Minister He Yafei told the Ambassador on July 23. AFM He expressed concern that "some U.S. officials" are "casting doubts" on the status of Taiwan and also warned against U.S. weapons sales to the island. AFM He commented on the need for a special "mechanism" to allow Beijing and Washington to have instant communication in the event of a crisis. On Darfur, AFM He said China does not believe Chapter VII authority is necessary for deployment of peacekeeping forces. A July resumption of the human rights dialogue is unlikely because U.S. actions have "poisoned the atmosphere," AFM He asserted. The execution of former State Food and Drug Administration Director Zheng Xiaoyu shows that China is serious about improving product safety, AFM He claimed, while also saying that the U.S. media should tone down its "sensational" coverage. AFM He proposed working-level, diplomatic channel talks on establishing a military-to-military communication link. On counterterrorism, AFM He stated that China would like to improve cooperation, but doing so is difficult because recent U.S. actions give the impression that Washington is trying to "undermine China's stability." The Ambassador and AFM He also discussed Burma, the opening of AmConGen Wuhan, the return of Chinese fugitives and upcoming visits. AFM He thanked the United States for its help with the Hai Tong 7 rescue. (Note: Discussion on Iran reported Ref A.) End summary.

Taiwan: PRC Concerns Over Referendum, Arms Sales

¶2. (C) The United States, in public and in private, should put forth a "firmer and clearer" message against (Taiwan President) Chen Shui-bian's "dangerous" referendum on membership in the UN under the name "Taiwan," Assistant Foreign Minister (AFM) He Yafei told the Ambassador over lunch on July 23. AFM He said China appreciates President Bush's repeated statements about the one China policy of the United States and Washington's opposition to Taiwan independence, as well as U.S. warnings to Taiwan not to hold the UN referendum. The Chinese government has concluded, however, that Chen Shui-bian is going to hold the referendum,

regardless, in total disregard for Chinese, U.S. and regional interests. The United States has sent Chen a clear message, but Chen has not listened. Beijing therefore hopes Washington will be even more firm and clear in stating its opposition to the referendum, AFM He said.

¶3. (C) AFM He cautioned that allowing Chen Shui-bian to transit the United States en route to South America would counter previous U.S. statements against Taiwan's UN referendum. Warning Chen Shui-bian on the referendum while at the same time giving him a "comfortable transit" would be "self defeating." AFM He said he was worried that allowing Chen's transit would, in effect, give Chen tacit approval to proceed with the referendum. China is also "not happy" with the recent transit of the United States by Taiwan's "so-called" Vice President Annette Lu and the visit by Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) presidential candidate Frank Hsieh. China is particularly disturbed by reports that Hsieh will have a meeting with Under Secretary Burns, AFM He stated. Reiterating his concern over the referendum, AFM He said he was "personally worried" about the consequences of the referendum, which he equated with a "referendum on reunification versus independence." In the face of this provocation, the Chinese government will face "growing public pressure" to take action. AFM He declared that the United States keeps telling China to be calm, but the referendum could have "serious consequences."

¶4. (C) AFM He complained that "some U.S. officials" in Washington and New York are "casting doubts" on the status of Taiwan by saying the United States never recognized Taiwan as a part of the People's Republic of China. Acknowledging the complexity of the issue and its history, AFM He asserted that Taiwan's status as a part of China "is the basis of

BEIJING 00004844 002 OF 005

U.S.-China bilateral political relations." China understands that the State Department sent a letter to the U General Secretariat on this issue. China does not want a public

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debate over this subject, AFM He said. Turning to congressional actions on Taiwan, AFM He said he would spare the Ambassador the MFA's complaints about every piece of problematic legislation, but AFM He pointed to the "Tancredo Bill" as being "particulary egregious."

¶5. (C) On the subject of arms sales, AFM He mentioned reports that the United States is considering the sale of 30 Apache helicopters and "offensive" F-16 C/D fighter aircraft to Taiwan. China is under the impression that the United States will hold off on a decision until after the Taiwan presidential elections, but make the decision before the end of the current U.S. Administration, AFM He said. The Ambassador responded by reiterating our one China policy based on the three joint communiqus and the Taiwan Relations Act. The Ambassador reminded AFM He that all parties have a responsibility to maintain peace and stability in cross-Strait relations. China's fast-paced military buildup aimed at Taiwan has not helped the situation, nor has Beijing's attempt to restrict Taiwan's participation in international organizations.

"Communication Mechanism"

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¶6. (C) A bilateral "communication mechanism" could be useful in the event of a Taiwan crisis, especially with the Taiwan elections approaching, AFM He stated, noting that Executive Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo and Deputy Secretary Negroponte had discussed creation of such a mechanism at the recent Senior Dialogue. To make the case for the creation of such a channel, AFM He said that scheduling "formal consultations" can take too long. He recounted "rumors" that Taiwan might use one of its own submarines, disguised as a PLA vessel, to attack a U.S. warship in hopes of instigating

a conflict between the United States and China. The United States already has a hot-line with Taiwan, AFM He noted. The Ambassador replied that the United States is interested in hearing more specifics about this idea. The Ambassador reminded AFM He that the MFA already has several channels, including the Ambassador's own telephone number, to raise urgent concerns about any issue.

Upcoming Visit by TAO Director Chen Yunlin

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¶ 7. (C) AFM He made a pitch for receiving the State Council's Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) Director Chen Yunlin at a high level during his upcoming visit to the United States, which China hopes can take place in September. China was "disappointed" at the level of Chen's meetings during his last trip to Washington. Chen is a key player on cross-Strait policy, AFM He counseled, and it is important that the United States engage him.

Sudan/Darfur

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¶ 8. (C) The Ambassador urged China to support the UK draft resolution on Darfur before the UN Security Council. AFM He (reiterating points made July 20 by Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui to EAP A/S Hill, see Ref B) said China supports a concise, to-the-point resolution on Darfur that reflects the consensus of Sudan, the UN and the African Union. Chapter VII authority for the peacekeeping force is strongly opposed by Khartoum. If a peacekeeping operation is to succeed, it must have the support of the Government of Sudan. Explicit Chapter VII authorization is not necessary for the safety of the force as the troops would still be able to fire in self defense, AFM He asserted. The Ambassador countered that Chapter VII authority is necessary because peacekeeping forces would need to intervene if they saw refugees come under attack. Peacekeepers could not simply sit and watch just because they themselves were not under fire, the Ambassador said. MFA North American Affairs Director General Liu Jieyi interjected that such matters could be dealt with in the rules of engagement for the peacekeeping forces.

Human Rights

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¶ 9. (C) The Ambassador pressed for the resumption of a bilateral human rights dialogue at an appropriate level and noted that Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom John Hanford would like to visit China in 2007. AFM

BEIJING 00004844 003 OF 005

He responded that resumption of the human rights dialogue depends very much on the "overall atmosphere of bilateral relations." China was "seriously considering" resumption of the dialogue before a series of events, particularly President Bush's meeting with Rebiya Kadeer and the opening of the Victims of Communism Memorial in Washington, poisoned the atmosphere for such talks. These events may appear minor to Washington, but to China this is "pretty serious stuff." Resumption of a human rights dialogue by the end of July is unlikely, AFM He said, but "we shall see." The Ambassador urged China to decide quickly on a date for the dialogue. In addition, the Ambassador urged China to allow Yang Jianli to return to the United States and to parole American citizen Jude Shao.

Food/Product Safety

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¶ 10. (C) The Government of China is serious about food safety, AFM He declared, pointing to the execution of former State Food and Drug Administration Director Zheng Xiaoyu as proof. China welcomes discussion of safety protocols with the United States. There are 17 to 18 agencies involved on food safety issues in China, AFM He said, which makes internal

coordination a "nightmare." Nevertheless, China has taken "resolute measures" against problem exporters. These issues are mainly confined to small and medium-sized enterprises, not big companies. AFM He complained that the U.S. media is feeding "protectionist sentiment" in the United States by "sensationalizing" the story. China does not want to see "Made In China" become synonymous with "dangerous goods." The U.S. executive branch should "exercise its influence on the media" to tone down the coverage, AFM He said. The Ambassador reminded AFM He of the freedoms enjoyed by the press in the United States. The Ambassador urged China to be more candid about its problems instead of simply dismissing U.S. safety concerns or defending faulty Chinese products. The Ambassador emphasized that the Import Safety Working Group formed by the White House is not specifically directed at China.

Mil-to-Mil Channel

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¶11. (C) The Ambassador and AFM He discussed the establishment of a new military-to-military communication channel, another issue discussed at the recent U.S.-China Senior Dialogue. AFM He said the channel would be an important confidence-building measure and would serve to enhance "strategic trust." Such a channel would not necessarily be restricted to military-to-military matters, but could serve broader purposes. The two sides could use such a channel to alert each other to missile tests or to discuss strategic matters in other regions, such as Africa. AFM He suggested the United States and China convene meetings on the working level to discuss this further. Indicating it was too early to involve the People's Liberation Army, AFM He recommended that initial discussion of such a channel stay between the MFA and the State Department for now.

¶12. (C) The Ambassador said the USG hopes to see more reciprocity in mil-to-mil exchanges. The United States Strategic Command has issued an invitation to Second Artillery Corps Commander Jing Zhiyuan, but the Chinese side continues to say General Jing is "too busy" to make the trip. AFM He responded that China views "positively" exchanges on nuclear policy and strategy, but claimed that legal impediments remain on the U.S. side. Specifically, AFM He said he understood that exchanges on nuclear strategy are prohibited under the "DeLay Amendment" of the 2000 National Defense Authorization Act.

Counterterrorism, Nonproliferation

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¶13. (C) Many in the U.S. Government are dissatisfied with the one-sided nature of U.S.-China counterterrorism (CT) cooperation, the Ambassador told AFM He. The United States frequently provides information to China but rarely hears anything back. The information China does provide, meanwhile, is frequently out-of-date. AFM He responded that China is having difficulty moving ahead with CT cooperation because of the widespread belief that the United States is trying to undermine China's stability. Recent events raised concerns the United States is supporting the "enemies of China." USG contacts with Rebiya Kadeer, in particular, reinforce this idea. The Ambassador made clear the United States does not support East Turkestan independence and that

BEIJING 00004844 004 OF 005

meetings with Ms. Kadeer did not mean otherwise. While saying that he personally does not believe the United States is out to destabilize China, AFM He said the two sides must build trust. To this end, AFM He suggested a November visit to China by the new U.S. Counterterrorism Coordinator. AFM He also suggested that the United States and China proceed with Director General-level consultations on CT and nonproliferation later this year. He said the lifting of sanctions against individual Chinese companies such as China Great Wall Industry Corporation would help create a good

atmosphere.

Export Control Regime

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¶14. (C) AFM He said he had met recently with Assistant Commerce Secretary Padilla to discuss the new U.S. export control regime. AFM He said such controls reflect "mistrust," and Chinese companies would be unlikely to sign on. The Ambassador noted that China's January anti-satellite (ASAT) test had undercut Beijing's arguments that such controls should be lifted.

Burma

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¶15. (C) The Ambassador urged China, in the wake of the recent Beijing-facilitated U.S.-Burma talks, to press Burma to take positive steps, such as acting on UN Special Envoy Gambari's recommendations. AFM He said Burma is still interested in continued talks with the United States. The Burmese, AFM He stated, are annoyed over the public disclosure of the dialogue yet still want to proceed.

ConGen Wuhan

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¶16. (C) AFM He acknowledged that the United States can proceed with opening a consulate general in Wuhan under preexisting agreements but said the United States must give the MFA more clarity on the staffing of ConGen Wuhan. A "one-man" consulate general is "not serious," AFM He stated, indicating that, in his view, the State Department should request funds for a "larger operation." The Ambassador pushed back, noting that on the basis of reciprocity, the United States should be able to open an additional consulate general regardless of its staffing level. AFM He said China is interested in opening additional consulates, including in Atlanta and Honolulu.

Extradition

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¶17. (C) AFM He inquired about six fugitives whom China has requested be returned to the PRC. China is serious about fighting corruption and cannot let corrupt officials believe they can escape to a safehaven in Canada or the United States. AFM He urged the United States to accelerate the removal of such individuals. The Ambassador noted that we had in fact returned a fugitive to China in recent days.

Upcoming Visits: Wu Bangguo, FM Yang Jiechi

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¶18. (C) AFM He said China attaches great importance to the visit of National People's Congress Chairman Wu Bangguo to the United States, noting it will be the most important bilateral visit over the next 12 months. China was pleased that Chairman Wu had received invitations from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate President Pro Tempore Robert Byrd and would be received at the White House. AFM He noted that Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi plans to make his first visit to Washington as Foreign Minister October 1-2 and hopes to see President Bush, Secretary Rice and National Security Adviser Hadley.

George H.W. Bush U.S.-China Relations Conference

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¶19. (SBU) China is sending a high-level official, either a State Councilor or Vice Premier, to attend the 2007 George H.W. Bush U.S.-China Relations Conference October 22-25 at Texas A&M University. This official, He said, should also make an official visit to Washington.

Thanks for Hai Tong 7 Rescue

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¶20. (SBU) AFM He expressed China's appreciation for U.S. assistance in the rescue of survivors of the Hai Tong 7, a Chinese vessel that sank 370 miles northwest of Guam. Chinese consular officials already expressed thanks to Guam authorities, AFM He said.

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